

Michael F. Easley
Governor



State of North Carolina
Office of the Governor

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GOV. EASLEY SPEAKS AT BILLY GRAHAM CENTER GROUNDBREAKING CEREMONY

RALEIGH – Gov. Mike Easley spoke today with Rev. Billy Graham and son Franklin Graham at the groundbreaking ceremony for the new Billy Graham Evangelistic Association Center in Charlotte. At the ceremony, Easley spoke about the Reverend's contributions and presented him with a proclamation declaring October 29 to be Billy Graham Day.

"You have helped comfort, inspire and bring peace to people across the state, across the country and throughout the world," said Easley. "To have your center and library locate here means so much to this community and to North Carolina."

The Billy Graham Evangelistic Association national headquarters has been in Minneapolis, Minn. since Graham started the organization in 1950. In November 2001, the Association decided to move the headquarters to Charlotte where it would be able to expand. The new center will house a 50,000 square foot library, a museum and archives holding Graham's papers. It is scheduled to open in 2004.

Graham was born in Charlotte in 1918. Just before his 17th birthday he reached a turning point in his life and made his personal commitment to Christ. Graham attended Florida Bible Institute, and then Wheaton College. He began preaching, and launched his first crusade in 1949. He has preached on every continent to over 200 million people. In 1996, Graham received the Congressional Gold Medal.

Charlotte previously honored Graham in 1983 by naming 4.8 miles of highway the Billy Graham Freeway.

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